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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

GENERAL BOOKS AND BOOKS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

The Spiritual Interpretation of History. By SHAILER MATHEWS, A.M., D.D., LL.D., Professor of Historical and Comparative Theology at the University of Chicago and Dean of the Divinity School. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1916. Pp. x, 227. \$1.50.)

THE volume contains six lectures—the William Belden Noble Lectures—given at Harvard University. Their general purpose is to show the necessity of taking account of other than merely economic and geographical forces in interpreting human history. The author is for the most part commendably modest in his claims and does not press his points unduly. He is quite willing to admit the large place that impersonal forces have had in human history, but he rightly insists upon the recognition of other and spiritual motives co-operating with them. He is also sound in declining to estimate the relative importance of social forces.

If there is any habit of thought more dangerous than that of antithetical exposition—for who of us really knows enough to set reality in contradictions?—it is that of constantly questioning whether this or that fact is the more important. To ask whether the individual or society is more important is like asking whether the oak or the acorn is primary. Historical situations must be viewed synthetically, not analytically.

The first two lectures on the Limits within which the Spiritual Interpretation is Possible, and on Spiritual Tendencies in History as a Whole, seem somewhat perfunctory. The third, fourth, and fifth, on the Substitution of Moral for Physical Control, the Growing Recognition of the Worth of the Individual, and the Transformation of Rights into Justice, are suggestive and informing. The contention that genuine progress has been made along these three lines is supported by abundant illustrations, wholesome practical lessons are drawn from them, and the reasons for encouragement are emphasized in good homiletic fashion. Unfortunately there is no serious grappling with the problems raised by the war. A book on the spiritual interpretation of history appearing at this time might be expected at least to face some of these problems and to recognize their difficulty for the would-be interpreter.

The final lecture on the Spiritual Opportunity in a Period of Reconstruction, though practically helpful, is less compelling than could be wished, and betrays the benumbing effect of trying to combine science and religion in one discussion. The theistic conclusion somewhat hesi-

tatingly drawn in it is all too meagrely supported, and, although to be looked for in a series of lectures like the present, seems an intrusion in the context where it is found. The author apparently feels this, for he hastens on at once to other and I was about to say less controversial matters, but the assumption that his interpretation of history is the interpretation of Jesus would probably be as widely controverted.

The following passage summarizes the positions of the book and reveals the author's attitude and point of view with admirable clearness.

To give justice rather than to insist upon rights, to rely upon inner rather than outward moral control, to have every element of life expressive of the same spirit of love that God himself exhibits, and to regard love as not a desire to gain popular approval or even to get friends, but as a sacrificial determination to do to others as one would like to have others do to oneself—all this can be found as truly in any catholic reading of the facts of human history as in the words of Jesus. As has been repeatedly said, social evolution, conditioned as it is by the impersonal and economic world, is yet superior to that world. It is a spiritual movement which, if it be prolonged, will bring the world under the sway of the ideals of Jesus himself.

An Introduction to the History of Science. By WALTER LIBBY, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of the History of Science in the Carnegie Institute of Technology. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1917. Pp. x, 288. \$1.50.)

THERE has been considerable agitation of late for instruction in the history of science in our colleges and technical schools. This volume is a practical step in that direction.

The author has written a little book on a big subject in excellent English. Professor Libby's statement (p. 134), "Dr. Hutton presented his Theory of the Earth in ninety-six pages of perfectly lucid English", might well be applied to his own book, if we change the number of pages to 288. The style is condensed, but a pleasure to read.

How to approach the subject, how to organize the material, and how to present it to the reader, are problems which many of the longer histories of science have failed to solve satisfactorily. Professor Libby adheres roughly to chronological order, but his chapter-headings are topical. He discusses science as a whole and in the broadest sense, and does not as a rule consider the individual sciences separately. On the other hand, certain leaders of scientific thought and accomplishment are singled out, and their lives, personalities, and genius are entertainingly set forth. Perhaps another would not have chosen for emphasis just the names that the author has selected. English-speaking scientists, for example, seem to receive rather more than their due ratio of attention. But the author makes it clear enough that "science is international", and tells its story in a broad, human, and tolerant manner. Its relations to other fields of man's life—education, war, religion, industry, travel, philosophy, art, ethics, and democracy—are well touched